









## CATHOLIC WEEKLY INSTRUCTOR;

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## ST. SYLVESTER'S NIGHT;

OR,

## NEW-YEAR'S EVE.

*From the German of Spindler.*

(WALTERS, RUGELEY.)

THIS is one of those many beautiful stories with which of late years German literature has abounded; they are children's stories indeed, but then they are written in a manner so superior to the common class of tale books, that grown-up people may read them for the interest of the narrative, and the scholar for the beauty of the thoughts and language, and the moralist for the sound tendency of the instruction conveyed in them. The canon Schmid, De La Motte Fouqué, Hauff, and Spindler, are among the most noted of the writers of such stories, and we are indebted to Messrs. Burns and Walters, publishers in London and Rugeley, for translations of not a few of them. It is little to the credit of the Catholics of England and Ireland that versions of such books, many of them originally written by members of their own Church, and capable of effecting great good, have not long ago been made common amongst them; and it is indeed disgraceful, that the acquaintance of the greater part of our body with these works should be acquired through Protestant translations alone; for granting that literal fidelity to the text may be observed, yet the full manner, the spirit and sentiment of a writer, his allusions to holy sacraments, old rites and religious services, can only be expressed in proper terms by a mind moulded in the same faith and steeped in the same reverence as his own. We are bound to say, however, that those who have translated for the publishers whom we have named, are among the least objectionable on this score. In some books to be sure, we read "morning service," where, no doubt, the original words imply "the Mass;" but we cannot find that bold and unblushing perversion of the sense of books written by foreign Catholics which was indulged in so commonly in former times, in order to accommodate the books to the taste of this country and age.

The story of St. Sylvester's Night may be considered as an allegory, designed to show the danger of *discontent* with the arrangements of Providence; but as it often happens when a great writer proposes a great moral, his ultimate purpose is forgotten by the many in the charms of his story, so we fear will be the result in the present instance.

"Long, long ago, there lived in the depths of a grey old forest a woodman, who, from his sylvan craft, was called Sylvester.

"His hut, rough and rude in its exterior, like the gnarled and knotted trees among which it had been erected, stood solitary and alone, far removed from the concourse and turmoil of the busy, restless world. But within its wattled walls and narrow limits, there was much of peace and calm content, of bright domestic happiness—the joyous laugh of gay and innocent childhood, and its sweet, thrilling voices: for around the hearth might be seen the four children of the woodman, clustering round the knees of a loving mother, while the father, with his tender glances of fond affection, was bending over them all.

"It was a lonely, out-of-the-way place that hut in the forest glade, but it was their *Home*: there the whole family had been born and reared, Sylvester and his Eva, as well as their two daughters Rosa and Viola, and their sons Wilfrid and Wolfgang. And so they loved the greenwood well, and with an undivided love, for they had seen nothing beyond its confines.

"All beyond the limits of the forest was an unknown land to them: they knew as little of it as of the fleeting, scudding, ever-changing clouds which racked across the face of heaven, the sport of every fickle blast, and which cast their broad shadows over the tops of the towering pines of the forest."

The owner of the forest and liege lord of Sylvester, lived hard by, in a strong castle, surrounded by beautiful gardens. He watched over his vassals with all the love of a father, advising, reproofing, and encouraging them in all their trials and difficulties. Their children he allowed to live and wander in his pleasure-grounds, and no language could express the happiness in which their souls, uncorrupted by the world, abounded.

"The girls would often sit through half a summer's day upon some verdant bank, holding sweet converse with the flowers, listening to the shrill chirping tales of the merry-hearted crickets, or learning lessons of skill and industry



from the bees and ants. The boys would swing upon the waving boughs, and gather the secrets of the whispering leaves: there they learned to interpret the language of the birds, and to understand the meaning of every sound uttered by the wild animals. However lowly the flowers bent their heads, however fleetly the insects sped upon their way, Rosa and Viola comprehended their unspoken words: and let the tones of the beasts of the forest be as wild, the notes of the birds as innumerable, and the sighing of the trees as gentle as they might, Wilfrid and Wolfgang never failed to read them aright. Nay, they sought to make the very stars their friends, and would climb up to the summits of the loftiest trees, if so be that thereby they might but be nearer to their glittering, ever-watching eyes."

They were invited to go into the world without.

"Rosa was the first who answered, and she said, 'No, my dearest father; the lord's garden is all too bright and beautiful to be left. I would rather stay at home.'

"Next to her Viola spoke. 'My father,' replied the child, 'the Christmas rose, my favourite flower, is blooming, how can I leave it? it will be withered ere I could return.'

"Dear father,' cried Wilfrid, 'I should have loved to run by your side, but I have already promised the swan inside the castle wall, to try if I cannot beat him in swimming to-day.'

"Last of all the little Wolfgang addressed his parent. 'Father,' said he, 'I would have gone with you gladly, but the moon has promised to tell me a beautiful tale when she rises to-night, and I must hasten away, and climb the fir-tree top, that I may watch for, and listen to her.'

But though the children were thus happy in innocence and in the indulgence of every lawful desire, secret sorrow preyed on the heart of their father. His lord allowed no vassal to go beyond the limits of the forest; in vain had every want consistent with his condition of life been supplied and secured to Sylvester, in vain was he warned of the dangers and miseries befalling many as well in open country as crowded city; he acknowledged, indeed, the paternal care for ever guarding him, yet he sighed after the *experience* of the world without. The Lord of the Forest perceived his inquietude.

"Go, since you wish it, and try if the turmoil of the outward world will help you to quell your sorrow."

"A ray of pleasure beamed in Sylvester's eye as he prepared to depart.

"Take this with you,' said his kind master, and striking a fragment of rock with his foot, a heap of gold and silver coins instantly poured out of a cavity in the stone. 'Fill your wallet with these. They are much used in the world.'

"The woodman wondered in himself what their use might be, but, pleased with the brightness of the money, he obeyed without farther inquiry.

"Can you find your way back again?" asked the Lord of the Castle kindly. 'It is easy enough to pursue the path which lies straight before you, but think you that there will be

as little difficulty in the return? It is often a hard thing to come back the way we went.'

"I think I shall be able to retrace my steps,' replied Sylvester, looking up at the sun.

"Ah,' said the Lord of the Forest, 'you are leaning on a broken staff! The sun and stars in the outer world do not follow the same course as those which you know. I will find you a better guide. Here,' he continued, 'is one who will guide you faithfully.'

"At that instant a beautiful hound, with intelligence and honesty in his countenance, bounded from the brake towards the woodman, and then crouched down at his feet. 'Watchman shall go with you,' said the lord. 'You may trust him entirely. It is true he cannot reason about what he does, but his obedience is perfect, and he never misses his track. Should you lose him, however, I warn you beforehand that the fault will be yours, not his. Now, Sylvester, I will detain you no longer. Bid them farewell which are at home in the house; and then be wending on your way.'"

Sylvester proceeded on his way, and arrived at last at a great city.

"Oh! what a joyous life must these folks lead!' thought Sylvester cheerfully to himself. If my wife and children were but with me, how gladly could I end my days here!"

"Just then a troop of revellers passed him, singing in full chorus:

'Hurra! hurra!

Let's sing and play!

To-day it is

Sylvester's day!

Hurra! hurra!"

"How now!" exclaimed the woodman, astonished at what he heard, and scarce believing his ears. 'What means this?' But the inquiry remained unanswered; for none attended to it, save Watchman, who could not answer him.

"I am that Sylvester,' said he, 'to whom you have been all drinking; and thus,' he continued, as he quaffed a goblet of wine, 'I return the health you pledged me!'

"The landlord (for the woodman had entered a place of public entertainment), laughed at the jest; for a jest it appeared to him, and suggested that if such were the case, Sylvester ought to pay better than any one else on his own night.

"The traveller threw him a piece of silver, and the host retreated with a profound bow. But the news of such liberality soon spread, and forthwith many of the guests gathered around the extraordinary stranger, who thanked them in the finest phrases he could muster for the undeserved honour they were paying him.

"At this they laughed the more, but congratulated him on his arrival with increasing fervour, and pledged him again and again in the sparkling liquor.

"Ho, ho,' said Sylvester to himself, as he drew forth from his wallet a handful of coins, and gazed upon their numbers, 'I have learned *your* use, at least, to-night; but useful as you are, you must not run away too fast. However, to-night is my own, and these good folks must have some pleasure, in return for the honours they have paid me.

"With that, he proceeded to drink with them, and to treat



them; but just as one of their number was singing an ode to concord, there arose a quarrel among a group at a little distance. Anon, words grew loud and angry; and then blows were mingled with the words, and then the affray became general. Upon this, Sylvester thought it wisest to depart, much, apparently, to the satisfaction of Watchman, who threaded his way through the combatants into the street, and then trotted away before his master."

He helps a person in debt from the gold which had been given to him; offers money in vain to a dying man, who replies, "What should I do with money? Of what use can it be to me? It is health that I want." He assists a miser, of whose character he is ignorant, with the means of completing his annual savings, and who afterwards spurns him when in want. On one occasion he is so fortunate as to be of real service to some young people whose poverty prevented their immediate union; but presently he gives help to one who proves to be a gamester, and who commits suicide; and then he joins a merry noisy company among whom, when liquor has been freely taken, quarrels spring up, and on which occasion he kicks away his faithful dog Watchman, and begins to feel all the horrors of a reproaching conscience. Wearied and indignant with himself and others, he saw a venerable personage in sable robes gazing kindly on him. They conversed together, and Sylvester speaks:

"How have I been deceived!" he cried. "I thought to do good, and woe to me if my lord should call me to account for the riches he confided to me!"

"The woodman's companion smiled, and replied, 'You need not fear it. Your wise lord merely gives that contemptible dross into inexperienced hands, in order to see where, and in what sort of ground, they will sow their seed. One small seed will oft times bear fruit a hundred-fold. But the ground upon which it remains, without vegetating, must have been from the first, sterile, or rocky.'

"Sylvester stared as he heard words so unlike those to which he had listened of late. 'You speak wisely,' said he. 'Do you know my lord, of whom you say these things?'

"I know him," replied the good old man with beaming eyes. "Many, many know him, while some only hear of him afar off, and others are entirely estranged from him. He, on the contrary, knows them all, and loves them even as he knows: yea, and he forgives them too."

"Sylvester was touched by the affection with which his lord was spoken of by one person, even in the city which professedly disowned him, and felt the more ashamed that he had ever desired to leave him. 'If he forgives so many,' he exclaimed, 'may I not hope that he will forgive me too? Oh, that I knew my way back to him again! Oh, that I might feel after it and find it! Oh, that I had my faithful Watchman once more by my side!'

"If you are speaking of your hound," replied the old man, "I can give you intelligence of him. He came to me; and if you really wish to return home, he shall be your guide."

"And now a change seemed to come over Sylvester's spirit, so that he wist not what happened to him. But when he came to himself, he was no longer in the city—he had escaped from the labyrinth of streets, and the gay forest lay before him in the distance. Watchman bounded joyously towards it, and Sylvester as joyously followed him. At first the road was thickly peopled. Many groups of men and women met the wanderer. 'Whither away, fellow-countryman?' they exclaimed. 'Turn back.'

"Some, however, took him by the arm, and turned him back with them good-humouredly a little way. But when he heard the sharp bark of Watchman, he tore himself away, and ran after the hound, who, bounding on, was oft-times far in advance of his master.

"Adieu!" shouted scornfully the last group from which he escaped.

"Oh, what a rude and unkind people is this!" cried the woodman! "How thankful am I that I am no longer in their territories!" And then he kissed with joy the boundary of the forest, when he reached it in safety once more, just as the sun was setting.

"But soon did he clasp others beside the cold earth in his fond embrace. Soon was he covered with the kisses of Wilfrid and Wolfgang, who had seen him approaching, and now threw themselves into his arms. 'You have been long absent, Father,' they exclaimed. 'Come home with us. Our mother expects you.'

"Anon they stood before its humble door, and Sylvester's darlings flew forth in raptures to meet him, while the Lord of the Forest (who had adorned the walls of the hut with some of his own flowers), nodded kindly to him. 'I know all!' he said, seeing that the woodman was about to confess his errors and pray for pardon. 'Be of good cheer! To have recovered Watchman, and made three people happy, are deeds well pleasing to me, as proofs of the sincerity of your sorrow and good desires. If you now bring back a faithful servant, who desires to be true to me amid all vicissitudes, a good husband to his devoted Eva, and a good parent to these little ones, I will forget all that is past.'

"As ever I hope for help from you, my lord," exclaimed Sylvester fervently, "I will not leave home again!" And then he whispered to his wife, "Believe me, dearest, we are best here!"

"Joyfully did Eva hear his determination, and heartily did she coincide in it. All was once more happiness within that humble cot, and the woodman, instead of longing after the unreal pleasures he had quitted, was as much delighted as his children with the flowers which the Lord of the Forest had wreathed around his servant's dwelling."

## ON THE LOVE OF GOD.

He who feels good and perfect charity seeks himself in nothing, but the glory of God in all things. He envies no one, because he loves no selfish pleasure; nor wishes to rejoice in himself, but to be blessed in God above all good things. He deems no one to be good of himself, but refers all things to God, from whom all things spring up, as from a well, and in whom all the saints rest at last in gladness.—THOMAS A KEMPIS.



## RECOLLECTIONS OF A CHRISTMAS DAY.

AN accurate observer, with a hand powerful to seize, and a hand skilled in preserving manners, offers us a beautiful sketch of Christmas-tide in the "New Monthly Magazine" for December 1, 1825. Foremost in his picture is the most estimable, because the most useful and ornamental character in society—a good parish priest.

"Our pastor was told one day in argument, that the interests of Christianity were opposed to universal enlightenment. I shall not easily forget his answer. 'The interests of Christianity,' said he, 'are the same as the interests of society. It has no other meaning. Christianity is that very enlightenment you speak of. Let any man find out that thing, whatever it be, which is to perform the very greatest good to society, even to its own apparent detriment, and I say *that* is Christianity, or I know not the spirit of its Founder. What?' continued he, 'shall we take Christianity for the bitterness of a bad argument, or the interests real or supposed, of any selfish set of men? God forbid. I wish to speak with reverence (this conclusion struck me very much)—I wish to speak with reverence of whatever has taken place in the order of Providence. I wish to think the best of the very evils that have happened; that a good has been got out of them; perhaps that they were even necessary to the good. But when once we have attained better means, and the others are dreaded by the benevolent, and scorned by the wise, then is the time come for throwing open the doors to all kindness and to all knowledge, and the end of Christianity is attained in the reign of beneficence.'

"In this spirit our pastor preaches to us always, but most particularly on *Christmas-day*; when he takes occasion to enlarge on the character and views of the divine and beneficent Person who was then born amongst us, and sends us home more than usually rejoicing. On the north side of the church at M. are a great many holly-trees. It is from these that our dining and bed-rooms are furnished with boughs. Families take it by turns to entertain their friends. They meet early; the beef and pudding are noble; the mince-pies—peculiar; the nuts half play-things and half eatables; the oranges as cold and acid as they ought to be, furnishing us with a superfluity which we can afford to laugh at; the cakes indestructible; the wassail bowls generous, old English, huge, demanding ladles, threatening overflow as they come in, solid with roasted apples when set down. Towards bedtime you hear of elder-wine, and not seldom of punch. At the manor-house it is pretty much the same as elsewhere. If any family among us happen to have hit upon an exquisite brewing, they send some of it round about, the squire's house included; and he does the same by the rest. Riddles, hot-cockles, forfeits, music, dances sudden and not to be suppressed, prevail among great and small; and from two o'clock in the day to midnight, M. looks like a deserted place out of doors, but is full of life and merriment within. Playing at knights and ladies last year, a cunning young friend must needs send me

out for a piece of ice to put in her wine. It was evening and a hard frost. I shall never forget the cold, cutting, dreary, dead look of every thing out of doors, with a wind through the wiry trees, and the snow on the ground, contrasted with the sudden return to warmth, light, and joviality.

"I remember we had a discussion that time, as to what was the great point and crowning glory of Christmas pleasures. Many were for mince-pie; some for the beef and plum-pudding; more for the wassail-bowl; not a few boldly put in the claim of a dance; but we agreed at last, that although all these were prodigious, and some of them exclusively belonging to the season, the *fire* was the great indispensable. Upon which we all turned our faces towards it, and began warming our already scorched hands. A great blazing fire, too big, is the visible heart and soul of Christmas. You may do without beef and plum-pudding; even the absence of mince-pie may be tolerated; there must be a bowl, poetically speaking, but it need not be absolutely wassail. The bowl may give place to the bottle. But a huge, heaped up, *over* heaped-up, all-attracting fire, with a semicircle of faces about it, is not to be denied us. It is the *lar* and genius of the meeting; the proof positive of the season; the representative of all our warm emotions and bright thoughts; the glorious eye of the room; the inciter to mirth, yet the retainer of order; the amalgamater of the age and sex; the universal relish. Tastes may differ even on a mince-pie; but who gainsays a fire? The absence of other luxuries still leaves you in possession of that; but

'Who can hold a fire in his hand

With thinking on the frostiest twelfth-cake?'

Let me have a dinner of some sort, no matter what, and then give me my fire, and my friends, the humblest of fare shared with friends, and a few pennyworths of chesnuts, and I will still make out my Christmas. What! Have we not Burgundy in our blood? Have we not joke, laughter, repartee, bright eyes, comedies of other people, and comedies of our own; songs, memories, hopes? [An organ strikes up in the street at this word, as if to answer me in the affirmative. Right, thou old spirit of harmony, wandering about in that ark of thine, and touching the public ear with sweetness and an abstraction! Let the multitude bustle on, but not unarrested by thee and by others, and not unreminded of the happiness of renewing a wise childhood.] As to our old friends, the chesnuts, if any body wants an excuse to his dignity for roasting them, let him take the authority of Milton: 'Who now,' says he, lamenting the loss of his friend Deodati—'who now will help to soothe my cares for me, and make the long night seem short with his conversation; while the roasting pear hisses tenderly on the fire, and the nuts burst away with a noise—

'And out of doors a washing storm o'erwhelms

Nature pitch-dark, and rides the thundering eîms?'

*New Monthly, 1825.*



CHRISTMAS TIMES AS THEY ARE CELEBRATED  
IN THE COUNTRIES OF GERMANY, POLAND,

&c.

CHRISTMAS is one of those festivals to which the Polish clergy render the greatest solemnity.

During the fortnight which precedes this day of rejoicings, the priests prepare and bless some breads, white and smooth like the altar bread, as large as two hands. These breads are sent into every family, and there is not a house, from the miserable hut of the hind to the rich castle of the lord, who does not press forward to make an offering proportionable to his means, in order to procure this bread. The poorest peasant would fast for eight hours, if it were necessary, in order to manage with economy a present, which he considers himself obliged to offer to his priest in this circumstance.

Christmas Eve is a complete fast throughout every family. When evening comes the appearance of the first star is watched with impatience. He who perceives it runs immediately to inform the mistress of the house, who then causes dinner to be served up. Under the table-cloth is exhibited a little hay, to call to mind that Jesus was born in a stable. Every one takes his place at the table. Both the master of the house on one side, and the mistress on the other, after having broken a bit of the blessed bread, give it to the guests, who break a bit of it in their turn, and cause it to circulate around through the entire company. The ceremony of the blest bread being terminated, the repast begins, and, according to the circumstances of him who treats, it is composed of a large quantity of fish, together with some wine. But there is one thing above all which should never be forgotten upon any table, even upon that of the poorest person, it is a white loaf, very long, made expressly for this solemn supper, and which is called by the name of *strucle*. Upon this day of Christmas Eve, among the rich, with whom the greater number of guests generally assemble, it is no rare sight to see persons very much embarrassed, because they have been invited to twenty different places. At that period in which Poland was flourishing, the king placed himself at table surrounded by a brilliant retinue; and every nobleman ready to imitate this example of their king, acted the part of a petty sovereign in his own mansion.

Before midnight every one hastens to the Church, there an unanimous hymn sung announces the moment of the birth of our Saviour, and every voice cries out, "Jesus is born!" In many Churches figures are seen placed on the altar, representing the Child of Nazareth wrapped in swaddling clothes, between an ox and an ass upon their knees, and, as explanation, there is sung a Christmas hymn to the following effect:

"Joseph, where have you been, ah, where?"

I've been at Bethlehem;

I've sung before my Saviour dear,

I've been at Bethlehem.

And the ox, and the ass, each bent his knee

To the King of time and eternity.

I've been at Bethlehem.

The ox and the ass their Maker ador'd,

The world's Saviour, and our Lord."

This day of Christmas Eve, in the fields more particularly, is enlivened by groups of young people masked, who run on sledges, accompanied by players on the violin, and by singers; these groups, who disembark unawares into each house, represent the three Magi carrying offerings for the Lord. They give the name of *kuleg* to this diversion, of which the effect is so much the more amusing, the longer the masks help to conceal the person incognito. The poor peasants have also their violins, which they have constructed themselves, the strings of which are often made up of thread; they go in company with these ill-formed instruments, to sing under the windows of their lord little songs called *kolenda*. In the cities, poor people are seen traversing the streets, carrying a little cabin or hut, which represents the stable with the infant Jesus, and his mother, and St. Joseph, with the ass and the ox. They sing also the *kolenda*, and receive for each *kolenda* at least a large Polish sous.

Christmas day has arrived, the smallest morsel of nourishment is not taken, nor the least drink swallowed, until after having appeared at church, and assisted, if not partaken, of the most Holy Eucharist. Men the least devout follow this rule. No one is permitted to breakfast until he has heard Mass, and sang the hymns in honour of the Supreme Being, who has deigned to send his Son for the salvation of men. Then the rejoicings begin in the houses of the rich, and the visits of the poor begin, who come to receive their *kolenda*, or handsel, in return for their kind wishes.



These customs likewise are observed in Maronia, Croatia, and Dalmatia, Turkish provinces, as also in the province of Servia, where the Catholic religion suffers much, which we find proved in a work, "*Sur les chants populaires des Serviens*:"—"There is one feature which characterizes the religious ideas of the Servians, which consists in the manner in which they celebrate the festival of Christmas. Towards the evening of the eve of the solemn day, the father of the family goes out to the woods, where he cuts a young oak-tree, which is straight as possible. He then carries it to his family, whom he salutes with these words: 'I wish you a good evening and a happy Christmas.' They return the compliment in saying, 'God grant you the same;' and, at the same time, they pour on him some grains of wheat. The oak is then placed on the fire. The morning of Christmas Day is ushered in with the report of fire-arms. A visitor appears at the door of every house, who throws some grains of corn through the door, in saying, 'Jesus is born.' The visitor then approaches, and, in striking with the tongs on the oak lying on the hearth, he says, 'As numerous as these sparks are, so numerous may be our kine and horses, our goats and sheep, our swine and our bees.' After this, the mistress of the house throws a veil over the face of the visitor, and the remainder of the oak is carried into the orchard. Every one presents himself at the feast which follows with a wax candle lighted in his hand; then they pray and embrace each other in saying these words: 'May the peace of God be with you; Christ is born, verily, and we adore him.' And, to figure the intimate union of all the members of the family, the head joins all the wax lights into one bundle, and puts them on a large dish, which is, after being served up, filled with all sorts of grain, and having on it a cake of unleavened bread, which is called *tchisniza*; they then break the cake, and he to whom the bit of silver falls, which was concealed in the cake when kneading, it is considered to be the happiest of the family. The table remains always served up, and open for three days, to every one that enters. And they salute each other, to the first day of the new year, with these words: 'Christ is born, verily he is born.'"

In the Catholic parts of Germany, at the commencement of Advent, the young villagers, clothed with quite a particular costume, come to announce the return of Christmas, before the houses of the inhabitants of the

city; they wear great hats of gilded paper, surrounded with ribbons of every colour. They celebrate the nativity of the Child of Bethlehem, by songs of a curious originality, which exist in the memory of the people, and which by an oral tradition has, during many ages, passed from mouth to mouth to our days. In these little songs all the members of the holy family are described by turns, and the last portion does not certainly appertain to the ox and the ass. A couplet is consecrated to the simile of the little Nazarite, and that of St. Joseph, another moreover to the shepherd, who looks through the door of the stable nearly open.

In the parish churches, and particularly those of convents, little stables of a smaller or greater proportion are constructed. The new-born Infant, the Blessed Virgin, and St. Joseph, with the ox and the ass, are there to be seen represented in wax; through little pathways formed in the mountain come shepherds with their dogs; the eastern Magi appearing in the distance, with the star above their turban.

Visit on Christmas Eve any of the Protestant countries of Germany, and there is no place in the world where you will observe a greater portion of *etrennes*, or Christmas-boxes, distributed. In the middle of a large parlour, in every family, is planted the tree of Christ bending under the weight of dainties, gilded ornaments, and an immense quantity of little wax candles lighting; from the grandmother to the child scarcely able to walk, from the patron to the stable-boy, all are ranged around; every one comes bringing or seeking his gifts. Cries of joy resound, and are echoed from the houses into the streets, and the *trees of Christ* throw an illumination through the windows, and spread an astonishing glare through the city.

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### CHRISTMAS.

THE glowing censers, and their rich perfume;  
The splendid vestments, and the sounding choir  
The gentle sigh of soul-subduing Piety;  
The alms which open-hearted Charity  
Bestows, with kindly glance; and even those  
Which Avarice, and stern and bloated Self,  
Though with unwilling hand and ailing heart,  
Are forced to tender, show the season well,  
The season of kind things, and mark at least  
This day a Festival.



## SKETCHES FROM MUNICH.

No. 5.

THOUGH the adjacent country around Munich is so flat and bare, a very agreeable contrast is shortly experienced by a drive of a few miles; for then you arrive within the close proximity of the Tyrolese Alps, which advance a good way into Bavaria, and amid scenery of the most interesting description. The chief attraction of these parts, which are called the Bavarian Highlands, are several beautiful lakes, whose picturesque shores form a favourite resort of the people of Munich during the summer season. They abound in a great variety of fine scenery. Those of Tegernsee and Schliersee, for example, embosomed in the mountains, present features of the wildest and most romantic character, and are thought quite worthy of comparison with the more renowned lakes of Switzerland, to which they only yield in magnitude. The Lake of Starnberg, on the other hand, which is the nearest to Munich, lying about eighteen miles off, is of a more pastoral and tranquil cast of scenery, which still comprehends some bold traits at its southern extremity, where it approaches the mountains. A party of us made an excursion to this Lake during the latter part of September last, and derived the greatest gratification from it. It is a noble sheet of water, upwards of sixteen miles long, and five across at its greatest breadth; it is the largest of the Bavarian lakes, and celebrated for a delicious flavoured fish peculiar to it, called Reuchen, which is a royal monopoly. Its winding irregular shores are thickly dotted with villages of a most primitive and picturesque appearance, lying at the base of hills which swell away from the water's edge clothed with luxuriant woods to their summits. Perched up and down their romantic heights, overlooking the lake, and commanding magnificent prospects, are numerous villas and castles of the Bavarian noblesse, including several royal ones. Their beautiful grounds for the most part are freely open to the public. One of the most remarkable among them, is the castle of Duke Max, a brother-in-law of his present majesty, King Louis: it is situated at a sequestered village called Tutsing, about half way up the lake. One of our voyages of discovery was to this castle, of which we had heard much said: though the duchess and her children were sojourning at the mansion, we found the gates of the grounds invitingly ajar, and walked in without any molestation, perfectly free to rove about whither and as long as we chose. The place, as may be imagined, was laid out in a very tasteful and costly manner, nothing, to all appearances, having been neglected which could be supposed effective for so lovely a situation. There were, of course, graceful statues and grotesque fountains finely disposed in different directions; rustic bowers and seats commanding views of interest over the lake; hot-houses and conservatories with their luxurious store of exotic fruits and flowers. These objects, as

we anticipated enjoying the sight of them, so we were not disappointed; but one object of a remarkable kind which we encountered greatly surprised us, and was quite a novelty, as we thought, in such a scene. While sauntering among these beautiful grounds, we presently perceived, that they were terminated a good distance off by a very lofty eminence of steep access, covered to the top by a dense plantation of tall firs; on approaching nearer to it, and more directly in front of it, we beheld it crowned by three huge crosses, on which were crucified figures of our Saviour and the two thieves, with our Blessed Lady at the foot of the centre cross. A flight of steps cut in the side of the hill which we ascended, having a resting-place half-way up provided with seats, brought us after an arduous climb to the summit of this superb Calvary. Here we found on an even cleared space encircled by trees, before the awful and colossal effigies, several rows of benches set apart for devotion. Below our feet we gazed on the diminished towers of the mansion, whose principal front lay directly towards us: so that when its lord looks from his drawing-room windows over the diversified prospect of his grounds, his eye finally rests on the passion of his Redeemer as the presiding object of the scene. Calvaries are very frequent in these parts by the road-side, in church-yards, and in other public localities; but we were not prepared to meet with one towering as the most conspicuous feature over the pleasure-grounds of a great nobleman, and on so ample and splendid a scale. Having an English priest of our party, he suggested that we should not fail on such a spot to offer up a prayer for the reconversion of England: so that the day might presently arrive when such places as Chatsworth, Stowe, or Belvoir, would assuredly have each their Calvary, like Duke Max, significantly presiding over the grandeur as well as troubles of this transitory world. As may be supposed we at once closed in with so felicitous an idea, and immediately joined him in reciting aloud the well known litany for so desirable a consummation. After we had finished, we lingered for some time on the hallowed eminence enjoying the magnificent prospect of the lake, spread out like a sheet of silver beneath the clear sunny heavens, which along with its diversified shores it reflected in its bosom; then we descended the steep steps of the hill, often turning to behold afresh the blessed spectacle above our heads under its solemn canopy of pines now gradually diminishing behind us. When we reached the grounds below, we had to proceed forwards some distance before we could obtain a last sight of this remarkable Calvary, which having satisfied, we kissed our hands to it in token of reverential adieu after the true native fashion of the people when retiring from any sacred image or picture, and launched again on the lake in quest of farther adventures; but we did not meet with any, however, which we thought of so special an interest as this, and which, therefore, need be enlarged upon. We landed at several very interesting points, inviting for their various beauties of sce-



nery, and had occasion to visit several village inns as well for our own refreshment from time to time, as for that of our boatmen, who were stout beer-drinkers, and constantly thirsty. These village inns we invariably found in the most cleanly and trim order, and among other peculiar characteristics, affording strong evidence of the innate religion of the Bavarian peasantry. We all know what sort of picture-decorations are usually to be found in the drinking-room or bar of a country alehouse in England. Race-horses, prize-pigs, and portraits of notorious boxers, and such subjects, are the favourite ones selected. But in Catholic Bavaria a different taste prevails, as we had constantly to remark; for we did not enter a single country inn, that I recollect, where the peasantry were drinking and smoking, but a large Crucifix, suspended against the wall, was the most prominent object we saw: together with pictures of our Lady and Child, of St. John, St. Joseph, the Evangelists, and Patron Saints of the district. Such subjects as these ever formed the chief ornament, varied by portraits of the Sovereign and his Family, and, in one or two cases, by prints illustrative of national history. We also observed, that when the poor people entered the beer-room, they, for the most part, doffed their caps, or inclined their heads respectfully to the effigy of the Crucifixion, before seating themselves and calling for their drink: for the rest, their behaviour was sufficiently noisy and gross, as is characteristic of the merriment of their class; nor are the Bavarian Boors at all more polished than any other. From drunkenness, however, they are wholly free; and when, at times, it does occur in individual cases, it usually draws on its subject a fund of coarse ribaldry and rough treatment from his comrades, whose taste for practical jokes is greatly elicited by so rare and apt an occasion. Though the idea may be gainsaid in a variety of plausible ways, yet, after all, who can be certain how great the influence may not be of the holy emblems which I have alluded to, in repressing the degrading excesses of intoxication, and with them, their manifold disastrous consequences, which are so marked a feature of the poorer classes of England? Let a man be ever so practically irreligious, his depraved inclinations will assuredly feel some diffidence in manifesting themselves to their worst extent, while the awful representation of his crucified God immediately confronts him, whose salutary influence must also equally operate over any company assembled for enjoyment in its presence. It is at least certain from the testimony of intelligent travellers, differing with one another on other points, who have published their observations, that in those countries where Catholicism prevails, and where consequently the sensible appeals and emblems of religion on every side meet the public eye, in market-places and highways, in hotels and shops, nearly as extensively as in the churches themselves; there is almost a total absence of those more brutish and inveterate habits of vice among the people which are so rampant in Protestant countries,

such as England, America, Sweden, and others. Nor are the people of Catholic states any the less merrier on account of their superior sobriety; on the contrary, none are more lively and joyous, more completely free from all puritanical affectation and pharisaical gloom than they. At all events, I can answer for the Bavarians, who, while they are so regular, and recollected in all religious duties, are nevertheless the greatest beer-drinkers and dancers that can be imagined. As in other Catholic countries, so in Bavaria, the greatest festivals of the Church are also those of the greatest pleasure for the people; from which it would seem that cheerfulness and true piety go hand in hand. These festivals, which very frequently happen, as all Catholics are aware, are invariably days of entire cessation from business, precisely as the Sunday is, or ought to be, and when the people sport their best finery. The forenoons of such days are passed in the churches, whose gorgeous services are crowded to excess, and whose altar-rails are never bare of devout communicants of all ranks. In the afternoons and evenings, hilarity and gaiety prevail on all sides. If it is seasonable, the dancing-gardens, which abound in every town and village, are thronged by young and old, when the giddy waltz becomes the universal and absorbing occupation. Nothing can be more striking in its way to the stranger, than a stroll in among the merry-makers on these occasions; however foreign his air may be, he needs be under no apprehension of meeting with the least impertinence, or any thing except respectful behaviour from the motley assembly. Perhaps it will not be unentertaining to say a word on the arrangement and aspect of such a scene. The place consists of a spacious green, railed in and planted with trees, ranged in rows; under the shade are small tables, at which beer, bread, ham, and coffee, are the customary refreshments served up, which are brought to you from a permanent wooden booth, erected on a convenient spot. In the centre of all is a large circular ball-stage, slightly elevated, and sheltered by a dome-like roof resting on pillars, the whole very fancifully painted and decorated; it is provided with an excellent orchestra, and all suitable conveniences. As before observed, the waltz is the dance invariably preferred by the Bavarian lower classes, and in the giddy circumvolutions of which they show a graceful agility of motion, which many an English drawing-room belle would envy, and which, assuredly, very few can equal. This is a point extensively allowed. The ball-stage is attended by a master of ceremonies, who regulates the dancing, adjusts disputes, and sees that all are made content who choose to join in the diversion. In another part of the ground is a bowling-alley, where nine-pins, a very favourite game indeed, is vigorously played at. Then the children are not forgotten, for whose diversion carriages and horses, on moveable frames, are provided, and swings similar to those seen at all fairs in England. Sometimes a miniature railway, the whole length of the ground, with stations, tunnel, and



all complete, on which a train drawn by a poor pony, flies swiftly along, gives delight to many a nursemaid's charge. In different parts, too, are lofty galleries erected of wooden lattice-work, commanding a bird's-eye view of the scene below, where those who have an aerial taste can perch themselves with their refreshments. When the weather turns out bad, the company retreats to the house of the proprietor close at hand, which usually contains a regular ball-room, overlooked by galleries, and intended for the winter evenings. But the national costumes to be seen at these re-unions, are among the most curious attractions to a stranger. The young women of Munich sport a head-dress quite peculiar to the place, and which, formerly, was equally common to the wealthy classes, among whom many still continue to wear it. It consists of a sort of bag, shaped like a swallow's tail, made of gold or silver tissue, and fastened on behind; it has a very elegant effect, and on account of the material costs a great price. But this is compensated for by the length of time it will wear without tarnish, said to be ten or twelve years. The present King Louis, so renowned for his taste in the arts, has a great predilection for this piece of local costume, and gives to it a marked countenance, which is said to be the cause why it has not as yet wholly declined to the lower orders. Besides the Munich head-dress, there are many others not less peculiar extensively adopted. One of these is composed of black lace, and shaped like a dragoon's helmet, from which different coloured ribbons stream down behind nearly to the heels. Hats, too, like tall cones, with rims, and without rims, ornamented at the top by a bunch of flowers or a long feather, are very much in vogue. A favourite style among more elderly females, is a huge fur cap, formed like a turban, with a band and tassel of gold lace. These are a few of the more distinguished novelties generally witnessed among various others which it would be equally tedious to recollect as to particularise. In other respects, the Bavarian women are remarkable for the elaborately and richly embroidered bodices which they display on holidays, secured by gold and silver chain girdles passing round the waist and fastened in front by enormous chased clasps; then they wear sleeves and petticoats of the most dazzling colours, stiffened to that degree, as in the latter case to realize the idea of hoops. As decidedly unique a cut as any, however, is presented by many belles having their plaited party-coloured petticoat scarcely covering the knee, while highly polished hessian boots reaching above it encase the leg: nor is the odd taste of this appearance the less to be admired, when, as occasionally happens, the boots in question are of scarlet or yellow leather. At the same time, massive gold drops depend from their ears, and jewelled rings glitter on more than one finger; costly armlets, too, are of frequent occurrence. Indeed, the jewellery worn by the Bavarian lower class of females, on gala occasions, is very profuse and costly, and from its fashion suggest, that it must have descended down in their families for

generations. The attire of the men is marked by a predilection for thick sailor-like jackets, decorated with double rows of huge plated buttons; ponderous hessian boots well greased sheathe their legs and half their thighs, while high pyramid beavers for the most part surmount their heads, decked off invariably by a bunch of artificial flowers stuck in the band behind, which imparts a certain gay janty air, as though cares sat lightly. Among those of a more patriarchal time of life, ample great coats, and broad-brimmed hats, commonly prevail. Such is the array of finery which distinguishes the festive meetings of the commonalty in these parts. But many of these pleasure-gardens are not always appropriated for dancing; numbers abound which are frequented on fine evenings by the class of middle, tradespeople and their families, where they pass an hour or two over their pipes and beer, listening to an excellent band of music stationed in an orchestra occupying the middle of the scene. People of the highest station also mingle in these places. Every brewery has usually one attached to it. At intervals the proprietors give fêtes, when the grounds are illuminated, and the band, always very good, made more than usually efficient. These resorts of both descriptions are very trifling in their expense. On special occasions, perhaps an entrance charge of twopence is made; on others, the sale of refreshments, and the small fees for joining in the amusements provided, includes every thing. But I fear my remarks have already grown too tiresome and prolix, so I will conclude at this place for the present.

November 3, 1844.

X. Z.

### A GIGANTIC CHIMNEY.

THE first object which greeted my eyes on entering Glasgow, was an enormous chimney, which towered out through the mist over the city, like the Minster of Strasburg, and the St. Stephen's Tower of Vienna. This chimney is said to be the loftiest in the British empire, and is a real wonder in its way. I heard its height estimated at 450 feet. As this appeared to me impossible, and as I wished to examine this giant chimney nearer, my first walk in Glasgow was to "Tennant's Stalk," as it is commonly called by the townspeople. Tennant is the proprietor of one of the largest chemical works in Glasgow, or indeed in Great Britain. Sulphuric acid, soda, and many other articles, are there manufactured. It was very desirable to carry up to a great height the many noxious vapours which rise from these works; and, in order to avoid quarrels with his neighbours, the owner resolved to erect this gigantic chimney, which probably has not its equal in the world. The whole chemical establishment of Mr. Tennant occupies, of course, a considerable space, and a subterranean passage leads from each of the fires, in all the different departments, to the giant chimney. These numerous walled passages unite under ground into a few large ones, which, in their turn, meet in the great chimney, which thus carries up the smoke of the whole establishment at once. The workmen told me, that when they descended for repairs into any of these subterranean channels, if the doors were not very carefully closed, the draught of air was so strong, that it was with great difficulty they could escape being carried away with it.—*Kohl's Travels in Scotland.*



## THE PLAGUE AT MILAN.

## CHAPTER II.

*How St. Charles orders his affairs, as if he were on the point of death, and devotes himself altogether to the service of the sick.*

WHEN the relations of St. Charles saw him resolved to wait on the sick himself, they left no means untried, to induce him to change his purpose, and to force him to retire into a safe place whence he could issue his orders for their assistance. But however urgent they were, they could obtain nothing from him; he loved his dear flock too well not to go to assist them in so dangerous an evil and so great a calamity. Although he had great confidence in God, and hoped that He would take care of him when he should expose himself boldly for his people, yet for the repose of his conscience, and in order to do nothing lightly which could cause his zeal to be termed imprudence, he assembled several persons of piety, who had only the honour of God and the performance of his duty before their eyes, that he might be governed by their advice. He made this proposition to them: "If, being Archbishop of Milan, and the plague making ravages in his episcopal city, which without him would be exposed to a very great calamity, he was not obliged to remain there to serve the sick, and if in conscience he could absent himself." What determined him still more to consult them was, that some in Rome, he had been informed, had said that he was not obliged to expose his life to serve the sick. These Doctors assembled together, brought forward all they could on this matter, and though they gave high praise to those who had been generous enough to expose their lives on similar occasions, they concluded that he was not obliged to do so in so manifest a peril, and they brought several reasons and authorities to give weight to their conclusions. But these did not please the Cardinal, who insisted that the duty of a good Pastor, on such an occasion, was to give his life for his flock, which he proved to them by the examples of many saints, who had despised the danger of death, in order to preserve the eternal life of their people, and by a number of homilies and epistles from renowned Bishops, who all maintained that the Pastors of souls were obliged, on such occasions, to assist their flocks and not to abandon them.

The assembled Doctors replied, that at least was a work of the greatest possible perfection. To this St. Charles replied: "Since it is a work of perfection I am then obliged to it, for the Episcopacy is a state of acquired perfection." They did not know how to answer this, but they conjured him to take care of himself, and to expose himself only with extreme caution, and to avoid touching those who were sick. He promised to do all this as much as his duty as Pastor of souls could permit; but it appeared very difficult and almost impossible, because whenever he went out into the city, the people, surprised to see him exposed to so evident a danger, threw themselves

at his feet, to beg his assistance and his blessing, and many, not content with that, tried to kiss his habit, to show that they placed great hopes indeed in him. How could a Pastor, possessing the feelings of a father, turn away in this calamity persons whom he loved tenderly as his own children? He never could suffer himself to do this, and he forgot his own danger in order to show the true paternal affection he had for his flock. Thus after he had resolved to devote himself entirely to the service of the sick, to administer the Sacraments to them, he turned to God, and made an entire offering of his whole being, humbly submitting himself to whatever it should please Divine Providence to ordain; then as if he had been assured that he should lose his life, he prepared himself to die well, and besides the interior dispositions which he endeavoured to gain, he regulated all his temporal affairs. He made his will, by which, leaving to his relations what he could not alienate from them, he named the great hospital at Milan for his heir, and left several legacies to his servants and several places of devotion; he recommended that care should be taken to offer the Holy Sacrifice and prayers for the repose of his soul; and he chose for his sepulchre the place which God has rendered so glorious and so celebrated by the infinite number of miracles wrought there through the intercession of this great saint. After having thus arranged his affairs, being then thirty-eight years old, he began to undertake the care of the sick, and he did not disdain to visit them in their houses, in order that he might be better acquainted with their wants, and able to relieve them more speedily. He found everywhere so much misery, and so many, afflicted with the evil, deprived of all necessaries for the body, and still more so for the soul, insomuch so that a great portion were dying without the Holy Sacraments, a state of things that caused him almost to expire of grief. He now visited the hospital of St. Gregory, which a Duke of Milan had formerly built for those who should have the plague. This place is square, and of great extent, surrounded on all sides with cells, like a religious cloister, with porticoes all round; in the middle is a large field, with a chapel dedicated to St. Gregory. It is open on four sides, for the convenience of the sick who inhabit the cells. This place is entirely surrounded, like a citadel, with a fosse full of water, and there is only one gate of entrance. There were already a great number of sick reduced to extreme necessity, for as soon as the magistrates of police discovered or suspected that a family were attacked by the plague, they shut up these persons in their own houses, and did not permit them to come out, or they sent them to this hospital of St. Gregory. They shut them up in the cells, as in so many prisons, with only the four walls, and then abandoned them without giving them the means of subsisting; and what added considerably to their grief, their number, their affliction, and misery augmented from hour to hour; they beheld father or mother, husband or wife, die before their eyes, without being able to assist them, or even to procure for them the happiness of receiving the Sacraments; and



those who survived for a few hours endeavoured to bury their friends, expecting a few moments afterwards, that some one would render them the same service.—When the holy Archbishop learned the pitiable state of this poor people, he went immediately to visit them, and as he was going round the outside, those who were shut up ran to the windows, and with lamentable cries entreated him as their dear Father, to have pity on their misery, and not to abandon them; one cried to him that his parent was dying, another, his friend; some tore their flesh in despair and grief, others represented to him the extreme misery and necessity of all; and others, in fine, melting into tears, told him that they were destitute of all spiritual help, and that all consolation for their souls was denied them. At last they all united to cry out to him: "Most merciful father! do not abandon us! Holy archbishop, great cardinal, have pity on us! Charitable pastor of our souls, take care of these poor abandoned ones, and console us at least by giving us your benediction before you leave us!" The confused and pitiable voices of this poor flock so moved with pity the holy prelate, that being unable to restrain his tears any longer, he stopped and wept over them; and not being able at that time to give them any other assistance, he tried to console them as well as he could, and promised that he would spare nothing, not even his own life, to assist them. Before he departed he blessed them all, and left them much consoled, and even assured that he would not be long before he would return and bring them relief.

(To be continued.)

## THE IMMENSITY OF THE UNIVERSE.

THE space in which the systems composing the universe move is illimitable. Were we to attempt to assign its limits, what could we imagine to be beyond? The number of worlds is infinitely great; it is inexpressible, indeed, by numbers. A ray of light traverses 180,000 miles in a second of time! A year comprises millions of seconds, yet there are fixed stars so immeasurably distant that their light would require billions of years to reach our eyes! We are acquainted with animals possessing teeth, and organs of motion and digestion, which are wholly invisible to the naked eye! Other animals exist, which, if measurable, would be found many thousands of times smaller, which, nevertheless, possess the same apparatus! These creatures, in the same manner as the larger animals, take nourishment, and are propagated by means of ova, which must, consequently, be again many hundreds of times smaller than their own bodies! It is only because our organs of vision are imperfect that we do not perceive creatures a million times smaller than these. What variety and what infinite gradations do the constituents of our globe present to us in their properties and their conditions! There are bodies which are twenty times heavier than an equal volume of water; there are others which are ten thousand times lighter, the ultimate particles of which cannot be seen by the most powerful microscopes! Finally, we have in light—that wonderful messenger which brings us daily intelligence of the continued existence of numberless worlds—the expression of an immaterial essence which no longer obeys the laws of gravitation, and yet manifests itself

to our senses by innumerable effects. Even the light of the sun—with the arrival of which, upon the earth, inanimate nature receives life and motion—we cleave asunder into rays, which, without any power of illumination, produce the most important alterations and decompositions in organic nature. We separate from light certain rays, which exhibit among themselves a diversity as great as exists amongst colours. But nowhere do we observe either a beginning or an end.—*Liebig's Letters on Chemistry, (Second Series).*

BY RICHARD MONCKTON MILNES, ESQUIRE.

THERE is a thought so purely blest,  
That to its use I oft repair,  
When evil breaks my spirit's rest,  
And pleasure is but varied care;  
A thought to gild the stormiest skies,  
To deck with flowers the bleakest moor—  
A thought whose home is paradise—  
The charities of Poor to Poor.

It were not for the Rich to blame,  
If they, whom Fortune seems to scorn,  
Should vent their ill-content and shame  
On others less or more forlorn;  
But that the veriest needs of life  
Should be dispensed with freer hand,  
Than all their stores and treasures rife—  
Is not for *them* to understand.

To give the stranger's children bread,  
Of your precarious board the spoil—  
To watch your helpless neighbour's bed,  
And, sleepless, meet the morrow's toil;—  
The gifts, not proffer'd once alone,  
The daily sacrifice of years—  
And, when all else to give is gone,  
The precious gifts of love and tears!

What record of triumphant deed,  
What virtue pompously unfur'd,  
Can *thus* refute the gloomy creed  
That parts from God our living world?  
O Misanthrope! deny who would—  
O Moralists! deny who can—  
Seeds of almost impossible good,  
Deep in the deepest life of Man.

Therefore, lament not, honest soul!  
That Providence holds back from thee  
The means thou might'st so well control—  
Those luxuries of charity.  
Manhood is nobler, as thou art;  
And, should some chance thy coffers fill,  
How art thou sure to keep thine heart,  
To hold unchang'd thy loving will?

Wealth, like all other power, is blind,  
And bears a poison in its core,  
To taint the best, if feeble, mind,  
And madden that debased before.  
It is the battle, not the prize,  
That fills the hero's breast with joy;  
And industry the bliss supplies,  
Which mere possession might destroy.



## CHANTING THE PSALMS.

(FROM LAW'S "SERIOUS CALL")

THERE is one thing still remaining that you must be required to observe, not only as fit and proper to be done, but as such as cannot be neglected without great prejudice to your devotions; and that is, to begin all your prayers with a *psalm*.

This is so right, is so beneficial to devotion, has so much effect upon our hearts, that it may be insisted upon as a common rule for all persons.

I do not mean that you should *read* over a psalm, but that you should *chant* or sing one of those psalms, which we commonly call the *reading psalms*. For *singing* is as much the *proper* use of a *psalm*, as *devout supplication* is the *proper* use of a *form* of prayer; and a psalm only read is very much like a prayer that is only looked over.

Now, the method of chanting a psalm, such as is used in the colleges in the *universities*, and in some *churches*, is such as all persons are capable of. The change of the voice in thus chanting of a psalm is so small and natural, that everybody is able to do it, and yet sufficient to raise and keep up the gladness of our hearts.

You are, therefore, to consider this *chanting* of a psalm as a necessary beginning of your devotions, as something that is to *awaken* all that is *good* and *holy* within you, that is, to call your *spirits* to their proper duty, to set you in your best *posture* towards heaven, and tune all the powers of your soul to worship and adoration.

For there is nothing that so clears a way for your prayers, nothing that so disperses *dulness* of heart, nothing that so purifies the soul from *poor* and *little* passions, nothing that so *opens* heaven, or carries your heart so near it, as these songs of *praise*.

They create a sense and delight in God, they awaken holy desires, they teach you how to ask, and they prevail with God to give. They kindle a holy flame, they turn your heart into an altar, your prayers into incense, and carry them as a sweet-smelling savour to the Throne of Grace.

The difference between singing and reading a psalm will be easily understood, if you consider the difference between reading and singing a *common song* that you like. Whilst you only read it, you only *like* it, and that is all; but as soon as you sing it, then you enjoy it, you feel the delight of it, it has got hold of you, your passions keep pace with it, and you feel the *same spirit* within you, that seems to be in the words.

Every state of the heart naturally puts the body into some state that is suitable to it, and is proper to show it to other people. If a man is *angry* or *disdainful*, no one need instruct him how to express those passions by the *tone* of his voice. The *state* of his heart disposes him to a *proper* use of his voice.

If, therefore, there are but few singers of *divine* songs, if people want to be *exhorted* to this *part* of devotion, it is because there are but few whose hearts are *raised* to that *height* of *piety*, as to feel any motions of *joy* and *delight* in the praises of God.

That it is the state of the heart that disposes us to rejoice in any particular kind of singing, may be easily proved from a variety of observations upon human nature. An *old debauchee* may, according to the language of the world, have neither *voice* nor ear, if you only sing a *psalm*, or a song in praise of *virtue*, to him; but yet, if in some *easy tune* you sing something that celebrates his *former debauches*, he will then, though he has no *teeth* in his head, show you that he has both a *voice* and an *ear* to join such music. You then awaken his heart, and he as *naturally* sings to such words as he laughs when he is pleased. And this will be the case in every song that touches the heart: if you celebrate the ruling passion of any man's heart, you put his voice in tune to join with you.

Thus, if you can find a man whose *ruling temper* is devotion, whose heart is full of God, his voice will rejoice in those songs of praise which glorify that God that is the joy of his heart, though he has neither voice nor ear for other music. Would you therefore delightfully perform this part of devotion? it is not so necessary to learn a *tune*, or to practise upon *notes*, as to prepare your heart; for as our blessed Lord saith, out of the heart proceed evil thoughts, *murders*, &c.; so it is equally true that out of the

heart proceed *holy joys*, *thanksgiving*, and *praise*. If you can once say with David, *My heart is fixed, O God, my heart is fixed*, it will be very easy and natural to add, as he did, *I will sing and give praise*.

Let us now consider another reason for this kind of devotion. As singing is a natural effect of joy in the heart, so it has also a natural power of rendering the heart joyful. \* \* As devotion of the heart naturally breaks out into outward acts of prayer, so outward acts of prayer are the natural means of raising the devotion of the heart. As *anger* produces angry words, so angry words increase anger.

So that, if we barely consider human nature, we shall find that *singing* or *chanting* the psalms is as proper and necessary to raise our hearts to a delight in God, as prayer is proper and necessary to excite in us the spirit of devotion. Every reason for the one is, in all respects, as strong a reason for the other.

If, therefore, you would know the reason and necessity of singing psalms, you must consider the reason and necessity of praising and rejoicing in God, because singing of psalms is as much the true exercise and support of this spirit of thanksgiving, as prayer is the true exercise and support of the spirit of devotion. And you may as well think you can be devout as you ought without the use of prayer, as that you can rejoice in God as you ought without the practice of singing psalms; because this singing is as much the *natural language* of praise and thanksgiving, as prayer is the natural language of devotion."

## THE CIRCUMCISION OF CHRIST.

THE year begins with Thee,  
And Thou beginn'st with woe,  
To let the world of sinners see  
That blood for sin must flow.

Thine infant cries, O Lord,  
Thy tears upon the breast,  
Are not enough—the legal sword  
Must do its stern behest.

Like sacrificial wine  
Pour'd on a victim's head  
Are those few precious drops of Thine,  
Now first to offering led.

They are the pledge and seal  
Of Christ's unswerving faith  
Given to His Sire, our souls to heal,  
Although it cost His death.

O bond of union, dear  
And strong as is Thy grace!  
Saints, parted by a thousand year,  
May thus in heart embrace.

Art thou a child of tears  
Cradled in care and woe?  
And seems it hard, thy vernal years  
Few vernal joys can show?

And fall the sounds of mirth  
Sad on thy lonely heart,  
From all the hopes and charms of earth  
Untimely call'd to part?

Look here, and hold thy peace:  
The Giver of all good  
Even from the womb takes no release  
From suffering, tears, and blood.

If thou would'st reap in love,  
First sow in holy fear:  
So life a winter's morn may prove  
To a bright endless year.

Christian Year.

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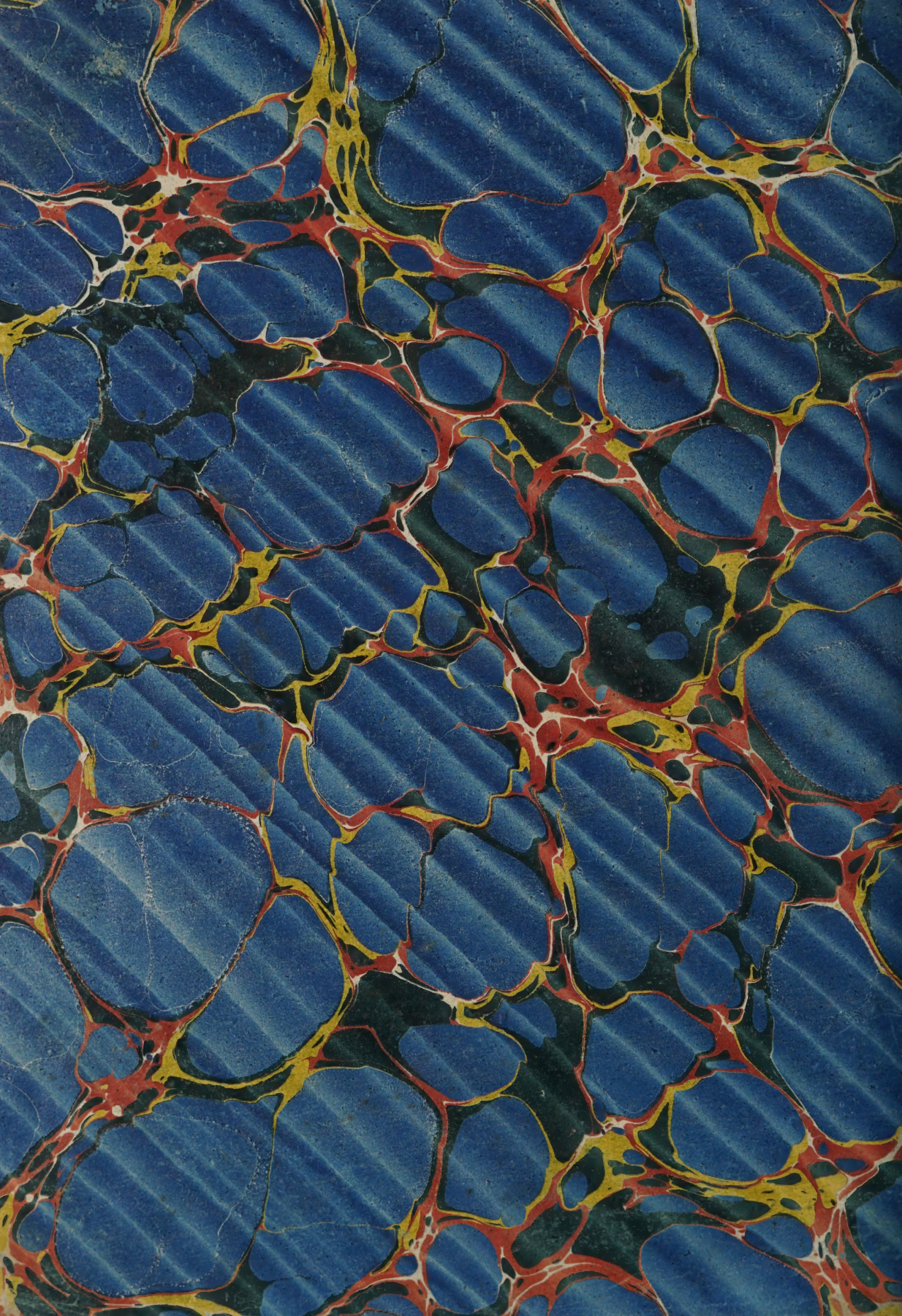














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